



# Recycling Lines

Electronic Newsletter

## December 2009

*Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Enhancement*

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DEQ's Community Involvement Initiative: The Department of Environmental Quality is dedicated to helping the public better understand DEQ's role in protecting the environment, and to involving the public more effectively in environmental decision making.

**Welcome to Recycling Lines.** If you have suggestions on future topics for the newsletter, please send the information to Steve Coe at [steve.coe@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:steve.coe@deq.virginia.gov).

### Coca-Cola Markets New "PlantBottle"

Coca-Cola has taken steps to increase the green factor in its plastic drink containers. Its new PlantBottle PET plastic bottles are made partially from plants. Drinks bottled in the new PlantBottle packaging are being sent to store shelves in select worldwide markets. Coca-Cola plans to produce 2 billion of the special PET plastic bottles by the end of 2010.

PlantBottle packaging is currently made through a process that turns sugar cane and molasses, a by-product of sugar production, into a key component for PET plastic. Ultimately, the Company's goal is to use non-food, plant-based waste, such as wood chips or wheat stalks, to produce recyclable PET plastic bottles.

Throughout Denmark, Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola Light and Coca-Cola Zero in 500mL and 2L sizes are now available in the PlantBottle packaging. Coca-Cola, Sprite, Fresca and DASANI in Western Canada will be shipped in the PlantBottle beginning in December and for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

PlantBottle packaging will be used for sparkling brands and DASANI in several sizes, starting in January, in select markets in the Western United States, including Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

### New EcoSchools USA Program

Schools looking to become "green" now have a new program to help in their planning. Eco-Schools is an internationally recognized program that provides a framework to help educators integrate sustainable principles throughout their schools and curriculum. The Eco-Schools USA goals are simple: 1) green the school buildings, 2) green the school grounds, and c) green the educational programming at registered schools.

A program sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), NWF was granted Eco-School host status for K-12 schools in the United States.

Visit [www.nwf.org/ecoschools/index.cfm](http://www.nwf.org/ecoschools/index.cfm) for more information.

### Did You Know?

- ✓ A U.S. Navy assault ship built using steel recycled from the felled World Trade Center was sailed up the Hudson River for a 21-gun salute. The USS New York contains 7.5 tons of steel from the World Trade Center site
- ✓ The American Forest & Paper Association, in partnership with Scholastic Inc., announced its updated *Recycling Starts with You!* recycling education program for grade 3-6 classrooms around the country. Visit <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3752736>.
- ✓ Guess how much trash the average hotel guest throws away every day. About two pounds — more than half of that paper, plastic, cardboard and cans that those same guests probably recycle at home.
- ✓ The City of Alexandria in conjunction with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services Solid Waste Division sponsored a **Recycling Works! Expo** on Wednesday, November 30 at the Dr. Oswald Durant Center at 1605 Cameron Street in Alexandria. For additional information call 703-751-5872 or email [askrobbie@alexandriava.gov](mailto:askrobbie@alexandriava.gov)

### Remember to Recycle Your Christmas Trees

Enjoy your tree all year! If you buy a tree with the roots still intact, the tree can be planted outdoors afterwards and can be decorated with orange slices, suet, bread and seed to attract birds.

Or, if you no longer want your tree, most municipalities have a tree collection schedule. Call your county or local government office to find out when they will be collecting trees. Your tree will most likely be recycled by grinding the trees into mulch which will then be used in municipal projects or offered to the citizens.

### Web Links of Interest:

- <http://www.monkeysee.com>
- <http://www.rbrc.com>

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### **Sears offers Electronics Trade -In Program**

Sears Blue Electronics, in partnership with the firm Gazelle, has launched a trade-in and recycling program that allows visitors to Sears.com to return used electronics for gift cards that are valid online and in-store. Even electronic items that no longer work will still be accepted at no cost for recycling, but consumers will receive lesser value for these items.

The program is free. Interested customers can follow these easy steps to participate in the program: 1) Visit [www.sears.gazelle.com](http://www.sears.gazelle.com). 2) Get an offer on electronics by answering a few quick questions. 3) Ship items. Shipping is free, and many customers will also qualify for a free shipping box.

The customer will receive a Sears gift card in the mail for the total value of their items. As a special holiday promotion, through Dec. 31, 2009, participants will receive an additional 5 percent of the value of their trade-in, added to their Sears gift card.

Sears estimates that through this partnership with Gazelle, that about 90 percent of the home electronics items that costumers send in will be reused, with the remainder will be responsibly recycled.

### **CVS announces program to cut down on single -use bags**

CVS/pharmacy, one of the largest retail pharmacies in the U.S., recently announced a new program to cut down on the use of single-use plastic bags. The company has introduced a new program, GreenBagTag, which works in conjunction with its customer loyalty promotion, ExtraCare.

The GreenBagTag is available for purchase at all of the company's 7,000 stores. Each time customers use a reusable bag or decline a plastic shopping bag, customers scan their GreenBagTag and ExtraCare card; every fourth scan, GreenBagTag cardholders receive a \$1 Extra Buck credit on their accounts. These Extra Bucks can be redeemed in stores for most merchandise.

### **Owens Corning recycles asphalt shingles**

Owens-Corning, a major producer of residential and commercial building materials, glass fiber reinforcements and engineered materials for composite systems, recently announced that it has established a new asphalt shingle recycling program for roofing contractors working in conjunction with the company's roofing division. According to officials, Owens Corning officially becomes the first roofing manufacturer to connect contractors with convenient recycling facilities through a national strategic partnership.

Working with Heritage Environmental Services, the nation's largest privately-held environmental services company, the program is based on a successful pilot project that was conducted in Indiana, and company officials claim it will be rolled out nationwide starting in the Midwest. Under the program, Heritage is responsible for providing conveniently-located centers that are dedicated to recycling and processing the shingle tear-offs dropped off by contractors. Contractors must pledge to recycle the post-consumer or post-industrial asphalt shingle tear-offs they recover.

### **Call2Recycle recycles 7.5 tons of batteries**

Call2Recycle, the only free rechargeable battery and cell phone collection program in North America, today announced that Battery Pack Rebuilders LLC has recycled more than 7.5 tons of rechargeable batteries since joining the Call2Recycle program in 2005.

Call2Recycle collects used rechargeable batteries found in cordless electronic products, such as laptop computers, cell phones, digital cameras, cordless power tools, PDAs, mp3 players and two-way radios. Since 1994, the company has diverted more than 50 million pounds of rechargeable batteries from local landfills and established a network of 30,000 recycling drop-off locations.

### **EPA Announces Winner of TV Recycling Challenge**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized Electronic Manufacturers Recycling Management Company (MRM) as the winner of the National TV Recycling Challenge for responsibly recycling approximately 3 million pounds of TVs. MRM, a joint venture between Panasonic, Sharp, and Toshiba, developed a TV collection network that uses a variety of collection approaches, including establishing collection points with charities and self-storage units. EPA evaluated challenge participants' efforts based on innovation, longevity, cooperative partnerships, consumer outreach, accessibility, pounds of TVs collected from January through August 2009, and ability to ensure that responsible recycling practices were followed.

EPA launched the TV Recycling Challenge to spur manufacturers and retailers to increase the collection and responsible recycling of TVs discarded by consumers as they replaced analog TVs with digital flat-screen TVs. To date, TV Recycling Challenge participants have recycled approximately 8.2 million pounds of materials. As America Recycle Day approached on November 15, 2009, EPA encouraged everyone to step up their recycling efforts to conserve resources and save energy.

The TV Recycling Challenge is part of EPA's Plug-In To eCycling program, which is a partnership between EPA and leading consumer electronics companies.

### **Recycling and Climate Change**

Recycling and waste reduction programs are activities that can have a positive effect on climate change. The energy used in the industrial processing of virgin materials and in their transportation involves burning fossil fuels such as gasoline, diesel, and coal, all major sources of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. While manufacturing goods from recycled materials still requires energy, it is much less than extracting, processing, and transporting virgin raw materials. Recycling and waste reduction programs also avoid emissions caused by incinerators and landfills which produce large amounts of carbon dioxide and methane (21 times more potent than carbon dioxide). Waste reduction and recycling also slow the harvesting of forests, which act as carbon sinks, meaning they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.